

# USGA

## “Observations Around the Southwest”

By Pat Gross, Agronomist

It's shaping up to be a strange year in the southwest. The heavy winter rains have caused significant problems for several courses, but everyone seems to be doing better now that warmer weather is approaching. This month, I thought I would give you a quick update on our observations so far this year and fill you in on some of the problems and innovative programs we have seen during our travels.

• **Effects of Heavy Winter Rains**

Heavy rainfall during winter and spring caused serious flooding at some golf courses. I saw water marks as high as 10 ft. on buildings as a result of the storms. Most of these courses are just starting to recover after removing tons of silt and debris and reseeding damaged areas. One significant benefit of

the rain was that it removed most of the salt buildup in putting green root zones. But don't assume that the problems is gone for good - continue to monitor your greens on a regular basis if you have struggled with salt accumulation in the past. The rains also washed out many of the nutrients in putting green soil profiles. If you haven't done so already, have a soil test performed and adjust your fertilizer applications accordingly. So far, many courses have been deficient in potassium and could benefit from monthly applications of potassium sulfate at 1-2 lbs /1000 sq. ft.

• **Weeds**

If you are discouraged by high weed infestation levels, you are in the same boat with everyone else. There has been an explosion of *Poa annua*, clover,

and other broad leaf weeds at most courses due to the winter rains and the inability to get preemergent herbicides applied at the right time. So far, I haven't seen any problems with crabgrass, but it may still be too early to tell. I anticipate that most courses will be using more post emergence herbicides this year to catch up.

• **Diseases**

It has been a bad year for winter diseases on greens, especially pink snow mold and yellow patch. The extended cool damp weather has caused infection as late as June. I have also seen an increase in dollar spot and red thread, mostly due to low nutrient levels in greens.

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## USGA Observations

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### Innovative Management Practices

I have noticed that many courses with old layered greens are double aerifying in the spring using a combination of standard hollow core and deep tine machines. This has worked exceptionally well to remove thatch, relieve compaction, and create deep channels in the soil profile without impacting the time necessary for recovery. The more holes you can get in those layered greens the better your chances with deep root development and leaching salts during the summer. Another surprising program observed was double deep tine aeration. This was done by first aerifying with the Floyd McKay deep drill followed by debris removing and heavy sand topdressing. Then a solid tine Vertidrain was used to make additional

deep channels and help work the sand into the holes. The results were very positive, and full recovery was evident within 14-21 days. I have to admit, I thought this was overkill at first, but the results speak for themselves.

Well, that's it in a nutshell. If you

haven't experienced any of these problems, consider yourself lucky. Best wishes for a successful and trouble free summer season - heaven knows we've already had our share of problems early in the year.



## Naumann's Norcal News

Joel Ahern is the new superintendent at San Jose Country Club in San Jose. Joel was the assistant prior to his promotion. He is replacing Skip McCaslin.

John Jorgensen is the new superintendent at Ruby Hill Golf Course in Pleasanton. John was at Brighton Crest Golf Course in Fresno before moving to the Bay Area.

The previous superintendent, Todd Norton is returning to Scottsdale, Arizona to build a new course and then stay on as superintendent.

Curtis Black, superintendent at Sunnyvale Muni has, after a few years, moved out of his temporary mobile facilities into a new state-of-the-art corporation yard recently completed at the Sunnyvale Muni Golf Course.

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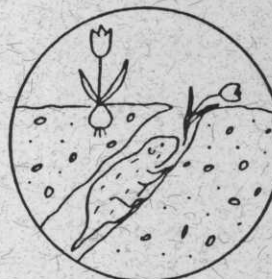


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